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ABSTRACT

Trends and issues related to arts and humanities in adult and continuing education can be categorized in three ways: ways of knowing, informal sites of learning, and cultural pluralism. The arts and humanities are vehicles for critical reflection, and they present paths to the individual construction of knowledge that are intuitive, relational, kinesthetic, visual, and aural alternatives to analytic and scientific methods. However, their potential is moderated by the motivation of adult learners. Much adult education in the arts and humanities takes place at informal sites and is increasingly focused on nontraditional audiences. Arts and humanities help homeless and incarcerated women find their voice and acquire critical literacy; humanities can help criminals alter their mental maps of the world and transform behavior. The democratizing of culture is reflected in another trend. The increasing cultural pluralism of society is expanding the notion of what is considered "legitimate" art, who creates art, and what are "acceptable" responses to it. Adult education in the arts and humanities has the following benefits for both individuals and society: development of perceptual ability, ability to exploit a particular medium of expression, ability to engage in the creative process, awareness of the nature of artistic activity, and critique of cultural value systems. (The document contains an annotated listing of 27 resources.) (YLB)

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Arts and Humanities in Adult and Continuing Education Trends and Issues Alerts

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TRENDS AND ISSUES ALERTS
ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education
by Sandra Kerka 1997

Arts and Humanities in Adult and Continuing Education

"Participation in the arts and the humanities unlocks the human potential for creativity and lifts us beyond our isolated individualism to shared understanding" (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities 1997, p. 1). In the current "learning for earning" climate, however, the arts and humanities are often neglected, despite their intrinsic value and their contribution to learning. Although the PCAH report stresses the importance of cultural education, its recommendation focuses entirely on educating youth for the future and does not mention adult education. This *Alert* looks at trends and issues related to arts and humanities in adult and continuing education in three areas: ways of knowing, informal sites of learning, and cultural pluralism. It concludes with an annotated list of resources.

The arts and humanities are vehicles for critical reflection, and they present paths to the individual construction of knowledge that are intuitive, relational, kinesthetic, visual, and aural alternatives to analytic and scientific methods. Museum visitors (Dufresne-Tassé 1992), performing arts audiences (Sgroi 1992), and readers of literature (Morgenthaler 1990) are often actively engaged in constructing meaning. Carr (1992) describes cultural institutions as sites for cognitive apprenticeship, as places in which information exchanged in the presence of stimulating experiences can lead adults to verify or revise existing knowledge and recognize alternative perspectives. Milton (in Elias et al. 1995) describes the arts as languages for communication of ideas. However, this potential is moderated by the motivation of adult learners: are students in painting, writing, dance classes etc. interested only in acquiring technical skills or in liberating their own creativity and transforming themselves (ibid.)?

Much adult education in the arts and humanities takes place at informal sites and is increasingly focused on nontraditional audiences. Micari (1992) and Baird (1995) highlight the value of arts and humanities programs in helping homeless and incarcerated women find their voice and acquire critical literacy. Minahan (1990) suggests that humanities can help criminals alter their mental maps of the world and transform behavior. Edelson (1994) asserts that adults circumvent institutional indifference by creating alternative networks to teach themselves art. New technologies such as the World Wide Web and CD-ROMs are injecting new life by making full texts of literary works, contents of art galleries, and music and audio clips accessible to much wider audiences (Gartner 1996; Lyon 1996).

This democratizing of culture is reflected in another trend. The arts and humanities have been tainted with a reputation for elitism, exclusion, and insistence upon expert interpreters. However, the increasing cultural pluralism of society is expanding the notion of what is considered "legitimate" art, who creates art, and what are "acceptable" responses to it (Greene in Elias et al. 1995). Artistic value judgments typically reflect the values of the dominant culture, but Jones (1992) urges educators not to measure learners' art products against culturally determined value systems, but to assess what learning takes place and how learners have developed their own creativity.

Arts and humanities education reflects the tension in adult education over whether it changes the individual or society. Jones (in Elias et al. 1995) suggests the need to place cultural values in a broader context. He cites the following contributions of adult education in the arts and humanities for both individuals and society: development of perceptual ability, ability to exploit a particular medium of expression, ability to engage in the creative process, awareness of the nature of artistic activity, and critique of cultural value systems.

Print Resources

Anania, J. "Rethinking Adult Literacy Programs." Paper presented at the North American Conference on Adult and Adolescent Literacy, Washington, DC, January 12, 1990. (ED 320 037)
The Humanities Enrichment Program improves the quality of adult literacy curriculum by exploring subjects of historical, cultural, and social interest through architecture, literature, local history and other topics led by humanities scholars.

Baird, I.C. "Promoting a 'Culture of Learning' through Creative Self-Expression." In *Pennsylvania Adult and Continuing Education Research Conference Proceedings (2nd, Indiana, Pennsylvania)*, edited by T.R. Ferro and G.J. Dean, pp. 13-17. PAACE, 1995. (ED 386 589)
An extension of a humanities learning model for homeless women sought to demystify literature for female inmates, helping them find their voice.

Barret, D. B. "Art Programming for Older Adults." *Studies in Art Education* 34, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 133-140. (EJ 473 703)
Describes programs that emphasize either the crafts or the fine arts approach. Recommends programs that promote creative thinking and self-expression.

Brennan, B. "Widespread Neglect in the Fourth Education Sector in Australia." *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education* 34, no. 2 (July 1994): 96-103. (EJ 498 527)
Adult and community education neglects museums and art galleries as venues, and museum staff neglect adults as learners in developing educational programming. Both groups should work more closely together.

Carr, D. "Cultural Institutions as Structures for Cognitive Change." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* no. 53 (Spring 1992): 21-35. (EJ 446 774)
Cultural institutions are essential agencies for stimulating and enhancing reflection and for constructing and expressing knowledge. They are sites for cognitive apprenticeship.

"Creativity in Later Life." Theme Issue. *Generations* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 4-70. (EJ 428 014-019)
Includes "Creativity and Life Review in the Visual Arts" (M.M. Rugh); "Making Your Own Mark: Creating a Community-Based Arts Program with Older Adults" (A.L. Belzer, M.M. Rugh); and "Fine Arts for Elders" (J. Richardson).

Dufresne-Tassé, C. "Adult Epistemic Behavior at the Museum." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1992. (ED 344 059)
Visitors to museums actively construct knowledge and experience complex cognitive functioning. Exhibits that do not support active learning block cognitive and emotional engagement.

Durr, D.; Fortin, S.; and Leptak, J. "Effective Art Education for Older Adults." *Educational Gerontology* 18, no. 2 (March 1992): 149-161. (EJ 445 447)
Observation of and interviews with the instructor and seven learners in a retirement center painting class revealed a classroom climate characterized by practices for facilitating learning: mutual respect, collaboration, critical thinking, and self-direction.

Edelson, P.J. "What If Grandma Moses Attended Night School?" Paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Adult Education and the Arts, Brussels, Belgium, July 1994. (ED 374 245)
Several trends present opportunities for educators to reach larger numbers of potential students: the aging population, the growing availability of places where adults can study art, and a heightened art awareness.

Edelson, P. J. "Self-Direction in Adult Art Education." Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Adult Education and the Arts, Fife, Scotland, July 1995. (ED 383 930)
A proposed model for adult art education focuses on helping adults learn and practice art throughout their lives. Educators can encourage adults to embrace a more flexible and personal approach to their own art education that is based less on mastering aspects of a "discipline" or "disciplines" and more on achieving meaning and satisfaction from their endeavors.

Elias, W.; Jones, D.D.J.; and Normie, G., eds. *Truth without Facts.* Brussels, Belgium: VUB University Press, 1995.
Selected papers from the first three international conferences on adult education and the arts include "Values in the Arts and Education" (Jones); "The Arts, Aesthetics and Values in Adult Education" (Greene); and "Arts for All: The Arts and Social Education" (Milton).

Gartner, R. "The Art of Tracking Humanities." *Information World Review* no. 112 (March 1996): 24-25.
Describes good starting points for exploring humanities resources on the Internet.

Hoffman, D. H. *Arts for Older Adults.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1992.
Explores activities and motives for older adults' involvement in visual arts, music, theatre, dance, and creative writing and suggests ways to integrate artistic creativity into geriatrics and therapy.

Hubbard, R.S. "Reclaiming the Power of Visual Thinking with Adult Learners." In *New Entries*, edited by R.S. Hubbard and K. Ernst, pp. 128-140. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996.
A teacher educator explains how she helps adults be "whole thinkers" by expanding their ability to use visual expression as a way of understanding and making meaning.

Hughes, V. "Whose Literature Is It Anyway?" *Adults Learning* 3, no. 7 (March 1992): 181-183. (EJ 444 012)
Adult education may be an effective means of dispersing "cultural fear," an obstacle to democratic access to literature, ensuring common ownership of a cultural heritage.

Jones, A.T. "Mask Making: The Use of Expressive Arts with Leadership Development." 1991. (ED 339 574)
Describes the integration of expressive arts with outdoor experiential education as an attempt to encourage balance between the technical and interpersonal skill development of leadership among experiential educators.

Jones, D.J. "The Liberal Tradition: How Liberal? Adult Education, the Arts, and Multiculturalism." In *Liberal Adult Education*, edited by C. Duke, pp. 67-70. Coventry, England: Dept. of Continuing Education, University of Warwick, 1992. (ED 365 786)
Teachers of art to adults should not measure learners' products against a culturally determined value system, but should measure what learning takes place, a fairer method of assessment in a multicultural classroom.

Keogh, K. *Artworks.* Boston, MA: System for Adult Basic Education Support, 1993. (ED 394 014)
Describes how to use theatre techniques such as relaxation and breathing, movement and body language, vocal projection, language rhythm, memorization, and improvisation skills to increase the self-confidence of students of English as a second language.

Lyon, J. "Studying Literature? You Never Had It So Good." *Information World Review* no. 118 (October 1996): 21-22.
Chadwyck-Healey's forthcoming Literature Online service, full-text literature databases, might revolutionize information provision in the arts and humanities.

McIntire, M. "The Humanities in Texas Continuing Education." In *TACSCE Research Annual v 6, no. 1*, pp. 6-26. Texas Association for Community Service and Continuing Education, 1990. (ED 333 147)
Asserts that humanities programming is worth doing in a pluralistic society because it emphasizes human experience and values. Notes that continuing education programs have devalued humanities offerings.

Micari, S. "The Theater Workshop Project." 1992. (ED 362 581)
A project for homeless women and children uses storytelling to build the aural foundations of literacy and acting to develop expression in narrative forms. It combines study of children's literature and development with folklore and adult literature from the women's cultural heritage.

Minahan, J. "Mapping the World." *Journal of Correctional Education* 41, no. 1 (March 1990): 14-19. (EJ 404 728)
It is false to assume that morality can be taught and that increased moral sophistication will reduce recidivism in a causal sense. Humanities are probably helpful in dealing with recidivism because they improve the way inmates "map" the world and their place in it.

Morgenthaler, S. "Using Poetry to Teach Humanities in the Adult Literacy Classroom." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education, Salt Lake City, UT, 1990. (ED 326 666)
The humanities help literacy learners develop critical thinking and communication skills; they promote expression of beliefs, self-understanding, valuation abilities, and cross-cultural awareness.

Powell, M. C. "On Creativity and Social Change." *Journal of Creative Behavior* 28, no. 1 (1994): 21-32. (EJ 481 438)
A creative writing program in Chicopee, Massachusetts, empowers disadvantaged women to make changes in their lives. It addresses the self-images imposed by social conditioning and the dominant culture.

President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. *Creative America.* Washington, DC: PCAH, 1997.
Asserts the importance of the public-private interdependent system of support for culture. Recommends measures to renew philanthropy, protect the nation's cultural legacy, invest in cultural leadership, and strengthen education in the arts and humanities.

Sgroi, A. "Exploring Adult Learning in the Arts." *Adult Education Research Conference Proceedings (31st, Athens, Georgia)*, compiled by P. Kleiber and L. Tisdell, pp. 201-206. Athens: University of Georgia, 1990. (ED 357 160)
Engaging in an art form enables adults to affirm their existence, express their uniqueness, control their own learning, and understand life.

Sgroi, A. "Let's Face the Music and Dance." *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* no. 53 (Spring 1992): 61-71. (EJ 446 777)
Uses the learning in modern dance as a model for learning in the arts that is process rather than product oriented and relies on intuitive rather than scientific methods for obtaining knowledge.

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